

THE COOPERATIVE SEAPOWER STRATEGY: TIME FOR A SECOND ENGAGEMENT

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

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identify the necessary means to execute its own seapower strategy. The author argues that the end result could and should yield a radically different fleet composition.

THE COOPERATIVE SEAPOWER STRATEGY: TIME FOR A SECOND ENGAGEMENT

In October 2007, the United States Navy, the United States Marine Corps and the United States Coast Guard rolled out their tripartite *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. Signed by the Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughhead, the Commandant of the Marine Corps General James T. Conway, and the Commandant of the Coast Guard Admiral Thad W. Allen, the document claimed to be “an historical first” – never before had the maritime forces of the United States come together to create a unified maritime strategy.¹

The genesis for a new maritime strategy officially began in June 2006, during the Secretary of the Navy-sponsored *Current Strategy Forum*, at the Naval War College in Newport, RI, when the former Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Michael Mullen, called for the development of a new maritime strategy. ““When I initiated the discussion of what it should be,” he said, “my view was that we needed one. We hadn’t had one in 20-plus years and you need a strategy which is going to underpin how we operate, what our concepts were, and literally how we invest.” The scope and scale of the new threats, the complexity of globalization, and the staggering rate of change seemed to make a major rethinking necessary.”²

The call for a new maritime strategy was a long time in coming. The last true strategy that the U.S. Navy had operated under was *The Maritime Strategy* of the 1980s. As Robert O. Work, a senior defense analyst at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments in Washington, DC, has observed, “since the end of the Cold War, the US Navy, US Marine Corps, and US Coast Guard have been in search of a

new maritime strategy—a new naval Holy Grail.”³ In the interim period, the U.S. Navy has had no less than 19 capstone documents (see Figure 1) and 12 unsigned and/or aborted draft efforts of documents (see Figure 2) proclaiming to be U.S. Navy “vision statements” or documents otherwise attempting to pass themselves off as “strategic.” It is no wonder that many critics have felt that America’s maritime strategy has been “without a rudder” for many years. How does the new cooperative seapower strategy measure up? Unfortunately, it is *not* the Holy Grail that Robert O. Work and the rest of us were looking for... but it could be with some additional effort. Now is the time for a second engagement on *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*.

Capstone Documents	Year
<i>The Way Ahead</i>	1991
<i>The Navy Policy Book</i>	1992
<i>...From the Sea</i>	1992
<i>NDP 1: Naval Warfare</i>	1994
<i>Forward... From the Sea</i>	1994
<i>Naval Operating Concept (NOC)</i>	1997
<i>Anytime, Anywhere</i>	1997
<i>Navy Strategic Planning Guidance (NSPG)(2)</i>	1999 & 2000
<i>Sea Power 21 & Global CONOPs</i>	2002
<i>Naval Power 21 ...A Naval Vision</i>	2002
<i>Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations (NOCJO)</i>	2003
<i>Fleet Response Plan (FRP)</i>	2003
<i>Navy Strategic Plan (NSP) ISO POM 08</i>	2006
<i>Navy Operations Concept (NOC)</i>	2006
<i>Navy Strategic Plan (NSP) ISO POM 10</i>	2007
<i>A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower</i>	2007
<i>Navy Strategic Plan (NSP) ISO POM 10 (Change 1)</i>	2007
<i>Navy Operations Concept (NOC)</i>	2008
<i>Navy Strategic Guidance ISO PR 11</i>	2008

Figure 1. U.S. Navy Capstone Documents Since *The Maritime Strategy*, 1986⁴

Capstone Documents	Year
<i>Won If by Sea</i>	1990
<i>The Strategic Concept of Naval Service</i>	1992
<i>NDP 3: Naval Operations</i>	1995-1996
<i>Power and Influence ...From the Sea</i>	1996
<i>2020 Vision</i>	1996
<i>Naval Operational Concept</i>	1997
<i>4X4 Strategy</i>	1998
<i>Beyond the Sea...</i>	1998-1999
<i>Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century</i>	1999-2001
<i>Navy Strategic Planning Guidance 2001</i>	2000
<i>21st Century Navy</i>	2002
<i>3/1 Strategy</i>	2005

Figure 2. U.S. Navy Unsigned and/or Aborted Capstone Documents Since *The Maritime Strategy*, 1986⁵

What's Wrong With the Strategy?

In the roughly one and a half years since its inception, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* has received a good deal of critical review—most of it falling far short of a ringing endorsement. Former Secretary of the Navy John Lehman called the strategy “a bravura performance,” but noted several of the documents key weaknesses, including not having “a clear and well-articulated statement of what is needed to implement the strategy – tightly bound to the strategy itself, and a lack of explicit emphasis placed on strike warfare and amphibious assault – the Navy’s crown jewels.”⁶ Robert O. Work and Jan van Tol note similar and other, more nuanced, problems with the strategy. They note that the lack of any associated strategic priorities or resource implications makes the document not a true strategy but rather an integrated strategic concept for the three Sea Services and should be more aptly titled a *Maritime Strategic Concept for Cooperative 21st Century Seapower*.⁷ Work and van Tol further (correctly)

observe that what they consider to be a maritime strategic *concept* may be weakened by four key omissions:

First, it offers little evidence that threats to maritime security, and their derivative threats to globalization and US interests, are growing, undercutting one of the concept's primary themes: that globalization is reliant upon improved maritime security. Second, the document fails to acknowledge, much less discuss, China's burgeoning maritime power and what that might mean to the three Sea Services. Third, it fails to discuss the strategic, operational, and tactical advantages of seabasing in an era when most US combat power resides on sovereign US territory. Finally, it does not acknowledge joint force contributions to the maritime strategic concept. These four key omissions may work to limit the concept's long-term strategic relevance.⁸

William T. Pendley, a retired Rear Admiral and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, called the new maritime strategy "a lost opportunity." In his view, the new maritime strategy misses several major elements and simply provides a list of current and potential threats and a catalogue of the core capabilities for maritime forces. He further laments that, "Beyond that, unfortunately, it marks a lost opportunity to develop a more effective and comprehensive military strategy to protect and advance America's interests."⁹

Christopher Cavas, of *Defense News*, wrote a particularly scathing indictment of the strategy, adding that "by not including or even alluding to a recapitalization plan in the strategy, the Navy missed a big opportunity to link its strategy and equipment needs in a single clear case for lawmakers."¹⁰ Judging from the critical reviews thus far, it seems that the Navy's strategic thinkers should put their "thinking caps" back on again and revise the strategy. With the new Obama presidential administration firmly seated in office, now would seem to be an opportune time to put some flesh on the bones of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* and to publish a more comprehensive version of the strategy that would address its major shortcomings. The three sea service

chiefs indicated that *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* is a building block document and that further experimentation, operational experience, and analysis are necessary, as is sea service commitment to building upon the ideas that the strategy puts forward.”¹¹ It is useful to step back and take a look at *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* from the macro-strategic level. How does it measure up as a strategy? What is its relationship to the overarching National or Grand Strategy?

What’s in a Maritime Strategy?

What exactly is strategy and, more to the point, what is a maritime strategy? One can find plenty of definitions of the word “strategy.” J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr. notes that “for such a significant term, there is no consensus on the definition of strategy even in the national security arena... every writer must either develop his or her own definition or pick from the numerous extant alternatives.”¹² However, all definitions of strategy tend to share common threads and can usually be traced to a common source: Clausewitz.¹³ What nearly every definition of strategy has in common, or at least should have in common, is its consideration of Clausewitz’s “remarkable trinity”— comprised of the People, the Government and the Military— and the trinitarian effect upon strategy at the grand, national level within the *ends, ways, means* paradigm.¹⁴ Breaking apart *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* into its component ends, ways, and means, one quickly finds that it doesn’t qualify as a true strategy.

As Robert O. Work and Jan van Tol accurately point out:

The strategy lists six “strategic imperatives”—key tasks that US seapower must accomplish—which serve as the strategy’s *ends*. These are: limit regional conflict with forward deployed, decisive maritime power; deter major power wars; win our nation’s wars; contribute to homeland defense

in depth; foster and sustain cooperative relationships with more international parties; and prevent or contain local disruptions before they impact the global system. It next lists six “expanded core capabilities,” or ways, needed to successfully achieve the ends. These are: forward presence; deterrence; sea control; power projection; maritime security; and humanitarian assistance and disaster response.¹⁵

The problem is that there is no discussion of the *means* required to execute the specified *ways* (capabilities) to get to the desired *ends* (strategic imperatives). What kind of “stuff” will the maritime services, not simply the U.S. Navy, but the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Marine Corps included, need to match the strategy’s stated ends? “Stuff” includes, *inter alia*, platforms, systems, resource priorities, personnel training, equipment, and organizational structure—essentially, the services’ collective Title X responsibilities to organize, train and equip. This is a fairly important piece of strategy to leave unstated. It would be convenient, and highly cost-effective, if existing platforms and systems could be leveraged to meet all six of the new strategic imperatives. In fact, legacy systems could probably fill the new cooperative maritime strategy’s stated needs— if all of the “strategic imperatives” were legacy imperatives—but they’re not, at least not all of them. The first four “expanded core capabilities” discussed by the strategy (Forward Presence, Deterrence, Sea Control and Power Projection) are clearly legacy maritime concepts adapted to the current environment. However, the final two (Maritime Security and Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Response) are new areas of emphasis and are a direct result of the realities of the current and (hoped-for) future globalized international system. All six seem to be good, solid maritime *ends*. The fact that the six strategic ends are, by definition, “expanded” and “new” would seem to logically require “expanded” and “new” *means* to meet those *ends*—but the new cooperative maritime strategy is silent on these matters.

Professor Robert Rubel, Dean of Naval Warfare Studies at the Naval War College, was in charge of the project to develop maritime strategy options and analyses for the Navy Staff in the months leading up to the development of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. Professor Rubel has stated that the lack of mention of maritime force structure (the *means*) was deliberately left out of the new cooperative maritime strategy. He specifically tells us that:

The Navy has been afflicted in the past few years with a controversy of sorts over force structure. One camp asserts that there are new mission sets, such as homeland defense, the Long War, and humanitarian assistance, that requires new kinds of forces. The other camp holds that the Navy should only build high-end combat forces and that these can be effectively used for less “kinetic” missions. A solution could not be found if the “dialogue” continued at the level of forces; therefore, the strategy project banned any discussion of force structure.¹⁶

Strategy is tough. Strategy is difficult.¹⁷ Strategy can be contentious. Paraphrasing Clausewitz: Everything in strategy is very simple, but that does not mean that everything is very easy.¹⁸ However, just because strategy is tough, difficult and can be contentious does not provide the strategist a convenient exit strategy from his or her responsibility to link the strategic *ends, ways and means*; failure to do so leads to a non-strategy.

Strategy depends for success, first and most, on a sound *calculation and co-ordination of the end and the means*.¹⁹ Clearly, and apparently *deliberately*, key Naval strategists and decision-makers, involved in the development of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, made a conscious decision to disregard any discussion of strategic *means* because it was too difficult, too contentious. The end result is a non-strategy.²⁰

In addition to the problems that *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* has tying together its *end-ways-means* equation, there is an even greater concern about its relationship, or lack thereof, to overarching National or Grand

Strategy, as represented in the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Military Strategy (NMS). The Nation's seapower strategy should serve as the maritime component of the National Military Strategy. This is a challenging task to fulfill if your seapower strategy was developed devoid of any relationship to the NMS or the NSS. Again, Professor Robert Rubel is instructive in the thought process that occurred in the development of the new cooperative seapower strategy. He writes that:

From the outset, this project did not simply derive from existing strategic guidance, such as the National Security Strategy or the National Defense Strategy. This may seem somehow subversive to those who are used to military planning processes in which guidance from higher headquarters is regarded as holy writ. However, consider our situation—the project was undertaken at the end of the Bush administration and our requirement was to look ahead twenty years. We could not responsibly make the assumption that current U.S. security strategy would remain in place, and there was no adequate way to predict the direction of the next administration's policies.²¹

Fair enough. There was, of course, another possible option: do not publish a new cooperative seapower strategy until the new U.S. president *is* in office and *is* able to provide national-level strategic guidance to the services. This course, for whatever reason, was not taken and it does not appear that a recommendation to wait another year to two years was ever formally made to the Navy by any of the strategy's developers. When the U.S. Navy hasn't had a formal maritime strategy published in over 21 years, what difference would another year or two (to obtain proper strategic guidance from the new administration) really make? This illuminates why publishing service-specific "strategies" can be a dubious effort; Edward Luttwak made the astute observation that the question of one-force "strategies," whether naval, air, or nuclear was a confused and confusing question.²² If naval strategy is decisive in and of itself, then it can serve as the basis of a national or grand strategy; if naval strategy (or any

other single force strategy) in and of itself is decisive, then it can achieve national strategic ends. This was the general thrust of Mahan's argument *vis-à-vis* maritime nations in *The Influence of Seapower Upon History, 1660-1783*. However, if this is not the case, and a single force strategy is not decisive at the grand strategic level, then where does it belong and what purpose does it serve? For Luttwak, a single form of military strength cannot have strategic applicability that would stand above the operational level [of strategy] yet below the level of grand strategy.

If there are no distinct phenomena, what then is the content of the many writings that carry "naval strategy," "air strategy," "nuclear strategy," or, most recently, "space strategy" in their titles? With the interesting exception of Mahan's claim for sea power, we find that it is mainly technical, tactical, or operational issues that are examined in that literature, or else that it advocates some particular policy, usually at the level of grand strategy.²³

This view is Clausewitzian in its roots and very much in line with the U.S. Army War College definition of strategy. "The U.S. Army War College defines strategy in two ways: "Conceptually, we define strategy as the relationship among ends, ways, and means." Alternatively, "Strategic art, broadly defined, is therefore: The skillful formulation, coordination, and application of ends (objectives), ways (courses of action), and means (supporting resources) to promote and defend the national interests." The second definition is really closer to a definition of grand strategic art, but if one cut it off after "means," it would be essentially the same as the first definition."²⁴ It is also in line with Sir Julian S. Corbett's thoughts on the strategic relationship between seapower and landpower, with seapower sustaining and supporting what land forces accomplish on the ground.²⁵ One must bear in mind the observations of such brilliant strategic thinkers when examining *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. Clearly, the strategy does not (and should not) propose that seapower is decisive, in and of itself, at

the national or grand strategic level. However, it must be a vital element of American grand national strategy and must serve as the maritime component to the American National Military Strategy (NMS); the United States is and has always been a maritime nation.

During the era of the Cold War, the linkage between maritime strategy and its associated maritime forces was vital to the national, grand strategy which composed of containment, nuclear deterrence, and conventional deterrence. Today, during the era of globalization and a new maritime strategy, maritime forces are similarly central, even essential to the containment, nuclear deterrence, and conventional deterrence of America's adversaries.²⁶ They are also vital to maintain command of the seas. Today, and in the near future, as James Kurth notes, "maritime forces would be more than central and essential to a national, grand strategy composed of command of the commons (and especially the sea), denial to our adversaries, and denial of their capability for denial (denial²). In this national strategy, they would be *unique*, i.e., they would perform central and essential tasks which could not be performed by the Army and the Air Force. Without adequate U.S. maritime forces, there will not be any U.S. command of the commons. Indeed, there will not be command of the commons by anyone; instead, there will be a common anarchy."²⁷ For the majority of the twentieth century, and for the foreseeable future, the U.S. Navy has been, and must continue to be, the global vanguard against maritime anarchy. As such, it is imperative that the U.S. Navy revisit its newly delivered cooperative seapower strategy and, develop a "Version 2.0" of the strategy. Version 2.0 of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* would address recognized shortcomings in the *ends, ways, means* paradigm

and would tie the cooperative seapower strategy to national, grand strategy. *The Maritime Strategy* of the 1980s is often seen as an exemplar of the systematic development of a coherent military strategy.²⁸ As such, it is instructive to briefly review that strategy.²⁹

The Maritime Strategy, 1986

The Maritime Strategy was first published in January 1986 in the U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings periodical. Written by Admiral James D. Watkins, USN, *The Maritime Strategy* stands to this day as an example of what a maritime strategy should be: simple, straightforward, logical, bold, and steeped in time-tested principles of maritime superiority. Taken together with its companion pieces: *The Amphibious Warfare Strategy* by General P. X. Kelley, USMC and Major Hugh K. O'Donnell, Jr., USMC, and *The 600-Ship Navy* by John F. Lehman, Jr., *The Maritime Strategy* provided the intellectual rationale and strategic underpinning for the 600-ship navy of the late 1980s. Widely considered to be the finest example of U.S. maritime strategy in recent memory, *The Maritime Strategy* succeeded where *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* fails. *The Maritime Strategy* also expertly tied together its strategic *ends*, *ways* and *means* into a logical argument and backed it up not only with programmatic numbers, but with ideas on exactly how those specific maritime platforms would be used to execute the strategic *ways*.³⁰ Most importantly, it was fully consistent with President Reagan's forward leaning foreign policy. As noted earlier, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* intentionally sidestepped these issues. As well-respected as *The Maritime Strategy* has become, hindsight, as they say, is 20/20. Proponents of *The Maritime Strategy*, and Navy Secretary Lehman in particular, were

widely criticized at the time for their positions on the way ahead for U.S. seapower and the 600-Ship Navy.³¹ The creators of *The Maritime Strategy* had just as challenging a task, probably even more so, as the creators of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* had in overcoming contentious interservice rivalries, interagency struggles, and entrenched bureaucracies and moving the procurement ball towards the its strategic goal line. The fact that *The Maritime Strategy* was logically compelling, well-organized, neatly tied together the *ends-ways-means* triad, and was championed from cradle to grave by influential men like former Secretary Lehman accounts for a good deal of its success. It also helps that *The Maritime Strategy* was well-aligned with U.S. Navy strategic culture and fit the “remarkable trinity” of the America in the 1980s.

Where Do We Go From Here?

The first order of business is for U.S. naval strategists to link their cooperative seapower strategy back to the National Security Strategy (NSS) as the maritime component of the National Military Strategy (NMS). This could prove to be a *challenging* task, as the Obama administration has yet to publish a formal NSS or NMS, but that is not to say that it is an *impossible* task. The key players who will drive national strategy and policy are in place in the Obama administration. A key figure (possibly *the* key figure) who will shape defense policy for President Obama is the new Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; Michèle A. Flournoy. Her writings on proposed grand strategy and defense policy are readily available. In June 2008, she co-authored *Making America Grand Again: Toward a New Grand Strategy* for the Center for a New American Security (CNAS).³² In it, the authors lay out a case that America has no grand strategic vision and has been without one since the fall of the Soviet Union.³³ Ms. Flournoy and

company reject the so-called “freedom agenda” of the Bush II administration and its reliance upon a doctrine of preventive war. In their view, as a result of the Bush II administration’s policies, the utility of America’s use of force has declined to such an extent that it actually undermines American strategic interests. What is needed in its place, they argue, is a “back to basics” grand strategy that that conveys a cooperative, vice hegemonic, tone. Paraphrasing the authors’ view: America’s core national interests should be refocused so that primary emphasis is on the most fundamental: security and freedom at home, economic prosperity, and access to the global commons.³⁴ As this author reads it, the grand strategy proposed by Flournoy et al seems to point towards a United States that:

- Is proactive, engaged, and cooperative in its approach towards all other nations, great and small
- Views the maintenance, and even the enhancement, of the globalized, international system as a vital U.S. national interest in and of itself
- Develops partnerships, improves foreign societies, and develops long-term capacity in underdeveloped nations that are of key strategic interest
- Prefers to use its military to prevent wars, rather than wage them—as such, the U.S. military can expect to be used heavily in preventative, capacity-building efforts that seek to bind the volatile elements of foreign conflict before they come together and cause a violent explosion

Fortunately for U.S. naval strategists, A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century *Seapower* is so broad in its scope and general in its visionary language, that it should be no great feat to link the cooperative seapower strategy back to the forthcoming

Obama administration NSS/NDS. In fact, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* already shares a number of common points of departure with the grand strategic vision enunciated by Ms. Flournoy and her colleagues. Unfortunately, it also highlights areas that are not necessarily emphasized by them. The true challenge for U.S. naval strategists, should they author the proposed version 2.0 of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, may lie in sharpening the focus of the cooperative seapower strategy to address *only* the core pillars of Obama's NSS/NDS and trimming away (or at least loosening its firm grip on) other long held and deeply felt assumptions about U.S. naval power and what U.S. naval forces will be needed to execute the 21st century strategy.

Reading the Tea Leaves

If the new Under Secretary of Defense for Policy is true to her writings, then what sort of defense policy implications can the U.S. Navy expect later this year when a new NSS/NDS is signed by the President? What aspects of naval power will have a role in the "New Grand Strategy" of the Obama administration? An analysis of Ms. Flournoy's *Making America Grand Again: Toward a New Grand Strategy* yields some clues that we can use to deduce answers; the following core themes seem to hold prominence in her document and may have direct application to U.S. naval affairs:

- Security – defense of the homeland
- Economic prosperity
- Access to the global commons – sea, air, space and cyberspace
- Sustainment
- Cooperation

- Humanitarian conviction

The core themes that Ms. Flournoy used in her “New Grand Strategy” may now be cross-referenced with the Core Capabilities that the U.S. sea services outlined in *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* in order to identify areas of commonality and, more importantly, focus areas that the U.S. Navy can use to determine the *means* (i.e., ship platforms) it needs to meet the grand strategic *ends* that are likely to be resident in the forthcoming NSS/NDS. The nexus between Ms. Flournoy’s proposed “New Grand Strategy” and the U.S. sea service cooperative seapower strategy are depicted in Figure 3 on the following page. Now that we’ve compared how the U.S. maritime services’ core capabilities line up with the core themes of Ms. Flournoy’s “New Grand Strategy,” we can take the next step and review the strategic *means*—naval shipbuilding and alternative fleet composition possibilities.

Building a Strategy-Driven Navy for the 21st Century

Frank Hoffman, a retired Marine officer and an analyst at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), authored an excellent study which assessed the Navy’s new cooperative seapower strategy, the Navy’s current and future shipbuilding plans, and reached the conclusion, based largely on Congressional Budget Office (CBO) analysis, that the U.S. Navy has a serious strategy-reality mismatch and “unless shipbuilding budgets increase significantly in real (inflation adjusted) terms or the Navy designs and builds cheaper ships, the size of the fleet will continue to fall substantially.”³⁵ This being the case, Hoffman evaluated four alternative fleet models for the near-future Navy and proposed which model best linked the new cooperative seapower strategy to the *means* (i.e., the fleet composition) needed to execute its

strategic ends. The four alternative fleet models that Hoffman reviewed are: 1) the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) Balanced Fleet option; 2) the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Force Transformation (OFT) Fleet option; 3) the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) Fleet option; 4) the Tri-Modal Fleet option. The ship platform breakdown for each alternative fleet model described by Hoffman is presented on the following page.


		A Cooperative Strategy for 21 st Century Seapower Core Capabilities					
		Forward Presence	Deterrence	Sea Control	Power Projection	Maritime Security	Humanitarian Assistance / Disaster Relief
Making America Grand Again: Toward a New Strategy Core Themes	Security / Homeland Defense		X			X	
	Economic Prosperity	X		X		X	
	Access to Global Commons	X		X	X	X	
	Sustainment	X			X		X
	Cooperation	X		X		X	X
	Humanitarian Conviction / Operations	X					X

Figure 3. Chart depicts nexus areas between the U.S. sea services' *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* core capabilities and the core themes resident in *Making America Grand Again: Toward a New Strategy* by Michèle A. Flournoy et al.

ALTERNATIVE FLEETS

	Current Fleet	Navy Plan	Alt. 1: CBO Balanced Fleet	Alt. 2: OFT Fleet	Alt. 3: CSBA Fleet	Alt. 4: Tri-Modal Fleet
<i>Aircraft Carriers</i>						
Large Aircraft Carriers (CVN)	11	11	7		10	8
Medium Aircraft Carriers (CVE)				24	4	0
<i>Surface Combatants</i>						
Guided Missile Destroyers	79	69	43		71	56
Guided Missile Cruisers	22	19	11	33	19	18
Small Surface Combatants				417		40
Littoral Combat Ships	2	55	40		55	48
<i>Submarines</i>						
Missile Submarines	18	14	10		18	14
Attack Submarines	53	48	35	48 AIP	48	40
<i>Expeditionary Ships</i>						
Amphibious Ships	35	31	15	24	31	36
Maritime Prepositioning Ships	0	12	12		12	0
Mine Warfare	14	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Combat Logistics and Support</i>						
Logistics/ Support Ships	48	50	38	12	45	40
Total Ships	280	313	211	558	313	300

Figure 4: Abbreviations: CVE: Conventional escort carrier. AIP: Air Independent Propulsion, a conventional submarine. CBO: Congressional Budget Office. OFT: Office of Force Transformation (formerly part of the Office of the Secretary of defense). CSBA: Center for Security & Budgetary Assessments. For other abbreviations, see source document.³⁶

Summarizing the characteristics of the four alternative fleets discussed by Hoffman:

- CBO Balanced Fleet – Results largely from cutting across various ship categories equally, producing a fleet that has only seven aircraft carriers and half as many amphibious craft as today. Under this option, the CVN-21 carrier would be delayed from 2008 to the 2020s due to affordability. Under this alternative, the total number of battle force ships would increase from 285 today to 299 in 2020 (due to the Littoral Combat Ship(LCS)) and then decline to 217 by 2035.³⁷
- OFT Fleet – A more radical fleet architecture. While OFT would mirror today's major operational formations (12 Carrier Strike Group equivalents, 12

Expeditionary Strike Group equivalents), the composition of the normal groupings would vary from the programmed fleet. The platforms proposed were based almost entirely on new ship designs. This option would use 24 smaller carriers would be approximately half the size of the current *Nimitz*-class carriers. Also included would be 417 corvette-sized ships that would be more in line with Admiral Cebrowski's "Streetfighter" concept. The final ship count for this particular fleet option would come in around 558 ships.³⁸

- CSBA Fleet – proposes extending the service life of many existing ships and extending current production lines. The CSBA force would have roughly the same number of ships as the current Navy plan, but at a more affordable level. This force is centered on today's existing platforms instead of investing in untested ship designs.³⁹
- Tri-Modal Fleet – A synthesis of the previous three models. The fleet would be sized and shaped to keep the global commons open and work proactively with friends and partners, while retaining the ability to dominate in conflicts that occur in contested zones in coastal environments.⁴⁰

Hoffman argues in favor of the tri-modal fleet option.⁴¹ While Mr. Hoffman's choice is a sound one and, given the four options presented, is probably the best of the lot for the very reasons that he cites. However, something is still missing from the solution set. The problem is that in each of the four alternative fleet options Mr. Hoffman presented (as well as in the "Navy Plan" fleet), the ship classes proposed are all primarily *combat oriented*. Nowhere to be found is any discussion of developing a class of surface ships that is specifically designed to execute the heart of Ms.

Flournoy's "New Grand Strategy," which is decidedly *not* combat oriented but, rather, seeks proactive ways to avoid conflict through cooperative, sustained, capacity-building operations in at-risk countries and with at-risk peoples, with a humanitarian conviction. In essence, what is needed is a U.S. Navy version of what Dr. Thomas P. K. Barnett called his System Administration (*SysAdmin*) force—a new class of U.S. Navy surface ship designed from the keel up with the capacity-building, humanitarian mission set in mind—or what this author will refer to hereafter as a *Proactive Defense Fleet* (PADF).

In *Blueprint for Action: A Future Worth Creating*, Dr. Barnett fully fleshed out the Leviathan-SysAdmin concept that he first introduced in *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century*.⁴² A thorough review of Barnett's thought-provoking Leviathan-SysAdmin proposal is well beyond the scope of this monograph. In short, Barnett explains his two concepts as follows:

Leviathan Force. The U.S. military's warfighting capacity and the high-performance combat troops, weapon systems, aircraft, armor, and ships associated with all-out war against traditionally defined opponents (i.e., other great-power militaries). This is the force America created to defend the West against the Soviet threat, now transformed from its industrial-era roots to its information-age capacity for high-speed, high-lethality, and high-precision major combat operations... The Leviathan rules the "first half" of war, but it is often ill suited, by design and temperament, to the "second half" of peace, to include post-conflict stabilization-and-reconstruction operations and counterinsurgency campaigns. It is thus counterposed to the System Administrators force.⁴³

System Administrators (SysAdmin) Force. The "second half" blended force that wages the peace after the Leviathan force has successfully waged war. Therefore, it is a force optimized for such categories of operations as "stability and support operations" (SASO), postconflict stabilization and reconstruction operations, "humanitarian assistance/disaster relief" (HA/DR), and any and all operations associated with low-intensity conflict (LIC), counterinsurgency operations (COIN), and small-scale crisis response. Beyond such military-intensive activities, the SysAdmin force likewise provides civil security with its police component, as well as civilian personnel with expertise in rebuilding networks, infrastructure, and social and political institutions. While the core security and logistical capabilities

are derived from uniformed military components, the SysAdmin force is fundamentally envisioned as a standing capacity for interagency (i.e., among various U.S. federal agencies) and international collaboration in nation-building...⁴⁴

The U.S. Navy already has a *Leviathan* force—what this author will refer to hereafter as an *Active Defense Fleet* (ADF)—and plenty of it. If one were to overlay specific surface ship platform classes on top of Figure 3, one would undoubtedly find that the Navy has the types of ships it needs to execute its four traditional core capabilities that were alluded to earlier in this monograph, namely: *Forward Presence*, *Deterrence*, *Sea Control* and *Power Projection*. Under Ms. Flournoy’s “New Grand Strategy,” the Navy may even have too much of an *Active Defense Fleet* (*Leviathan* force) in some of these four areas—her “New Grand Strategy” is fairly silent on specifics about *Deterrence* (notably nuclear deterrence) and *Power Projection* (particularly when it comes to nuclear and conventional deep strike capability, though she does speak to the “assured and sustained access” power projection crowd). Two new core capabilities (*Maritime Security* and *Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Response*) appear for the first time in a U.S. maritime capstone document. These are also the two capabilities that form the bedrock of Ms. Flournoy’s “New Grand Strategy,” for, taken together, they go a long way to enabling her “back to basics” core national interests of *Security and Freedom at Home*, *Economic Prosperity*, and *Access to the Global Commons*. These are also the two core capabilities where the U.S. Navy is lacking and needs to start developing real capability.

The *Maritime Security* core capability is a shared mission between the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard (as well as with a plethora of other military and interagency entities working in conjunction with one another). When it comes to the necessary *ends*

(i.e., the ships) needed for robust maritime security, the Coast Guard holds the lion's share of the assets and the bulk of the responsibility.⁴⁵ The Navy's challenge in this realm is to learn to communicate and operate better with the Coast Guard. Far too many ships, carrier strike groups, and expeditionary strike groups deploy from the continental United States without fully understanding the Homeland Security or maritime interdiction efforts the Coast Guard is actively involved in. The Navy can help out more in this area. Yet the biggest challenge to U.S. Naval planners and strategists lies in fully embracing the second new mission set: *Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Response*.

The U.S. Navy, to its credit, has been leading the charge in *Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response* (HA/DR) operations since the December 2004 Indian Ocean "Asian Tsunami" that devastated the coastlines of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand and left untold numbers of dead in its wake.⁴⁶ Since then, the U.S. Navy has made humanitarian assistance something akin to a core capability. Major humanitarian and civic assistance (H/CA) deployments have occurred annually since then, in multiple geographic areas of responsibility, often simultaneously.⁴⁷

The problem is that the majority of the small scale H/CA missions are being executed by surface ship platforms (such as amphibious landing ships, frigates, and destroyers) that were designed to do *Active Defense Fleet* (i.e., warfighting) missions, and thus have a very limited built-in capacity for *Proactive Defense Fleet* (sustained H/CA and capacity-building) missions. For a concept which looms so large in both the maritime services' cooperative seapower strategy and the "New Grand Strategy" authored by the current Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (and which will likely serve as the basis for the Obama NSS/NMS), the Navy's current humanitarian and

capacity-building efforts don't go far enough. Also, if amphibious landing ships, frigates, and destroyers are busy doing H/CA and capacity-building projects, then they are not training to do their primary mission—warfighting (*Active Defense Fleet* focus). Larger scale H/CA missions that utilize hospital ships and large deck amphibious ships have their own drawbacks. It costs a considerable amount of money to get a Military Sealift Command hospital ship, with its complement of Medical Treatment Facility staff, underway for a four to five month deployment every summer. The additional crew complement that must be billeted for such a mission is largely a massive “pick-up game” with hundreds of mission billets being filled by volunteers or individual augmentees sourced out of hide from other commands across the country. H/CA missions launched from large deck amphibious platforms also bring a great deal of capability, but they face the same “pick-up game” issue. Additionally, there is a heavy price to pay in managing the deployment and maintenance schedules of such high demand assets.⁴⁸

Rather than taking a surface combatant, amphibious ship, or hospital ship and attempting to turn it into something it is not, why not develop a class of small surface combatant that is specifically designed from the keel up to perform the sort of proactive missions which seek to avoid conflict through cooperative, sustained, capacity-building operations in at-risk countries and with at-risk peoples, with the humanitarian conviction that Ms. Flournoy alludes to in her “New Grand Strategy?” In doing so, the Navy would truly be putting its money where its mouth is. Such a ship class would form the backbone of the proposed *Proactive Defense Fleet*. It would solidly link a definable piece of its shipbuilding program to the one aspect of the cooperative seapower strategy and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy’s “New Grand Strategy” that has no

dedicated assets assigned to it—the humanitarian assistance, capacity-building, *SysAdmin*-like missions which are likely to occupy a pillar of the Obama administration’s forthcoming NSS/NMS. Such a notional strategy-driven fleet composition might look something like the Active/Proactive Fleet model depicted in Figure 5, below:

	Current Fleet	Navy Plan	Active - Proactive Defense Fleet
Aircraft Carriers			
Large Aircraft Carriers (CVN)	11	11	8
Medium Aircraft Carriers (CVE)	0	0	0
Surface Combatants			
Guided Missile Destroyers / Frigates	76	69	55
Guided Missile Cruisers (CG)	22	19	18
Littoral Combat Ships (LCS)	2	55	48
Capacity-Building / HA Ships	0	0	15
Small Surface Combatants (“Streetfighter”)	0	0	15
Submarines			
Missile Submarines (SSBN)	14	14	10
Attack Submarines (SSN)	53	48	40
Cruise Missile Submarines (SSGN)	4	4	4
Expeditionary Ships			
Amphibious Ships	33	31	32
Maritime Prepositioning Ships	0	12	0
Mine Warfare	14	0	0
Combat Logistics and Support			
Logistics / Support Ships	47	50	40
Total Ships	276	313	285

Figure 5: Comparison of Current Fleet, Navy Planned Fleet, and proposed Active-Proactive Defense Fleet (ADF-PADF) composition.⁴⁹

Summary

In October 2007, the United States Navy, the United States Marine Corps and the United States Coast Guard rolled out their tripartite *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. The strategy was immediately met with mixed reviews—many of them negative. Close scrutiny of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* reveals that it is not a true strategy. The problem is that there is no discussion of the *means* required to execute the specified *ways* to get to the desired strategic *ends*. Additionally, there is concern about its relationship, or lack thereof, to overarching National or Grand Strategy. This being the case, the U.S. Navy should open up a second engagement on its 2007 cooperative seapower strategy and develop a “Version 2.0” of the strategy. The next version of the seapower strategy should cast direct linkages back to the forthcoming Obama administration National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy, the nature of which may be gleaned from the writings of the new Undersecretary of Defense for Policy: Michèle A. Flournoy. In doing so, the Navy can better align its strategic focus with the administration’s and identify the necessary means to execute its own seapower strategy. There is a nexus between Ms. Flournoy’s new grand strategic vision and the U.S. maritime services’ *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. There are also areas of non-shared interest—areas where the sea services may have to make some very difficult decisions when it comes time to scale down the fleet to match the *ends*, *ways*, and *means* of “New Grand Strategy.” There is also an opportunity to develop a wholly new ship class that is designed to meet the newest and perhaps most transformational core capability of the 21st century—a ship designed from the keel up to perform the sort of proactive missions which seek to avoid conflict through cooperative, sustained, capacity-building operations in at-risk

countries and with at-risk peoples, with the humanitarian conviction that the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy alluded to in her “New Grand Strategy.” Such a ship class could form the backbone of the *Proactive Defense Fleet* (PADF) piece of the *National Fleet* (combined Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Corps platforms working together synergistically). The PADF would essentially serve as something akin to a maritime version of Thomas P.K. Barnett’s *SysAdmin* force, but would act in a proactive fashion, building partnerships and capacity before conflict occurs, rather than as a post-conflict reconstruction and stability force. The maritime services would retain an *Active Defense Fleet* (ADF), similar to Barnett’s *Leviathan* force, to meet active warfighting requirements—with realistic and affordable numbers of ships. Such a course of action would dramatically demonstrate to the world that the United States backs up its words with actions. It would solidly link the maritime services’ cooperative seapower strategy to the Nation’s new grand strategy and would complete the maritime *ends, ways, means* paradigm for many years to come. More importantly, it would serve notice that America is a Nation that can be trusted and looked to for leadership once again—a Nation that seeks to avoid conflict through cooperation and humanitarian conviction—with the maritime services playing their vital role right alongside their sister services.

Endnotes

¹ Admiral Gary Roughead, Chief of Naval Operations, General James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Admiral Thad W. Allen, Commandant of the Coast Guard, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, October 2007, <http://www.navy.mil/maritime/MaritimeStrategy.pdf> (accessed 21 January 2009).

² Geoffrey Till, “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: A View From Outside,” *Naval War College Review*, 61, No. 2 (Spring 2008): 26.

³ Robert O. Work and Jan van Tol, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: An Assessment*, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments Backgrounder, March 26, 2008, http://www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/PubLibrary/B.20080326.A_Cooperative_Stra/B.20080326.A_Cooperative_Stra.pdf (accessed 21 January 2009).

⁴ Peter M. Swartz, "U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies, Visions & Concepts (1970-2008)," draft study briefing slides, Alexandria, VA, Center for Naval Analysis (CNA), November 13, 2008, 35, <http://www.cna.org/documents/USN%20Strategies%20Draft.pdf> (accessed February 2, 2009).

⁵ Ibid, 36.

⁶ John Lehman, "A Bravura Performance," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, 133, Iss. 11 (November 2007): 22-24.

⁷ Work and van Tol, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: An Assessment*, 4-6, 12, 15.

⁸ Ibid., 26.

⁹ William T. Pendley, "The New Maritime Strategy: A Lost Opportunity," *Naval War College Review*, 61, No. 2 (Spring 2008): 61-68.

¹⁰ Christopher Cavas, "New US Maritime Strategy is Incomplete," *Defense News*, 22 October 2007.

¹¹ Roughead, Conway, and Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*.

¹² J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr., "A Survey of the Theory of Strategy," in *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues, Volume I: Theory of War and Strategy*, (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, June 2008), 13.

¹³ See Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1999), 17, for what may be the most comprehensive definition of strategy as it relates to Clausewitz. Here, Gray states that: "Strategy is the bridge that relates military power to political purpose; it is neither military power per se nor political purpose. By strategy I mean the use that is made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy. This is an adaptation from Clausewitz, though certainly not an adaptation of plain intent. In 'On War,' Clausewitz provides an admirably tight and terse, yet apparently narrow, definition: 'Strategy [is] the use of engagements for the object of war.' Clausewitz's definition is a superior one... If one can think expansively about what should be encompassed by the idea of 'engagements', the merit in Clausewitz's approach is overwhelming. Freely translated, he tells us that strategy is the use of tacit and explicit threats, as well as of actual battles and campaigns, to advance political purposes. Moreover, the strategy at issue may not be military strategy; instead it may be grand strategy that uses 'engagements', meaning all relevant instruments of power as threat or in action, for the objectives of statecraft."

¹⁴ See David Jablonsky, "Why Is Strategy Difficult?," in *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues, Volume I: Theory of War and Strategy*, (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, June 2008), 3-12, for an excellent summary of the remarkable trinity and its role in the development of national strategy and the continuum of war.

¹⁵ Work and van Tol, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: An Assessment*, 4.

¹⁶ Robert C. Rubel, "The New Maritime Strategy: The Rest of the Story," *Naval War College Review*, 61, No.2, (Spring 2008): 72.

¹⁷ Jablonsky, "Why is Strategy Difficult?," 3-10.

¹⁸ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ, 1976), 178. Also see Jablonsky, "Why is Strategy Difficult?," 3-10.

¹⁹ B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2nd revised ed., (New York: First Meridian Printing, 1991), 322.

²⁰ Edward N. Luttwak provides what may be the most comprehensive discussion on one-force strategies or, as he called them, nonstrategies in his book *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*, revised and enlarged ed., (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 168-184.

²¹ Rubel, "The New Maritime Strategy: The Rest of the Story," 70.

²² See Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*, 168, 172, for his full discussion on service-specific and one-force strategies. Here Luttwak states that: "Mere looseness of language and the innocent exuberance of one-force enthusiasts are both present. But if there really were such a thing as naval strategy or air strategy or nuclear strategy in any sense other than a combination of the technical, tactical, and operational levels within the same universal strategy, then each should have its own peculiar logic, or else exist as a separate counterpart to theater strategy, which would then be limited to ground warfare. The first is impossible, the second unnecessary... There can be only one valid justification for defining a strategy to just one form of military power: that it is decisive in itself."

²³ *Ibid.*, 171.

²⁴ Robert H. Dorff, "A Primer in Strategy Development" in *U.S. Army War College Guide to Strategy*, Joseph R. Cerami and James F. Holcomb, Jr., ed., (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2001), 11; Richard A. Chilcoat, "Strategic Art: The New Discipline for 21st Century Strategists" in *U.S. Army War College Guide to Strategy*, Joseph R. Cerami and James F. Holcomb, Jr., ed., (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2001), 205, quoted in J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr., "A Survey of the Theory of Strategy," in *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues, Volume I: Theory of War and Strategy*, (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, June 2008), 15.

²⁵ See Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, "Classics of Sea Power" series, (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1988), 15-16. Here, Corbett states that: "Naval strategy is but that part of it which determines the movements of the fleet when maritime strategy has determined what part the fleet must play in relation to the action of the land forces; for it scarcely needs saying that it is almost impossible that a war can be decided by naval action alone... Since men live upon the land and not upon the sea, great issues between nations at war have always been decided—except in the rarest cases—either by what your army can do against your enemy's territory and national life, or else by the fear of what the fleet makes it possible for your army to do."

²⁶ James Kurth, "The New Maritime Strategy: Confronting Peer Competitors, Rogue States, and Transnational Insurgents," *Orbis*, 51, No. 4 (Fall 2007): 596.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 587.

²⁹ Reviewing *The Maritime Strategy* at this junction can: 1) demonstrate that a maritime strategy can be promulgated which addresses all of the guidelines for strategy formulation; 2) demonstrate that such a strategy can be delivered in unclassified form (though classified portions may exist) and; 3) provide some insight on the way ahead for a potential revised version of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*.

³⁰ See Lehman, "A Bravura Performance," 22-24. In this article which assesses *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, former Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman, Jr. wisely advised that a successful strategy "must be simple, logical, and compelling. It also must be believed and followed as a framework for training, equipping, and employing naval forces. It must be public, and it must be understandable to the public and even to members of Congress. Above all, it must be understood by all ranks of the U.S. maritime forces and by all potential enemies."

³¹ John F. Lehman, Jr., *Command of the Seas: Building the 600 Ship Navy*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1988), 115-116. As John Lehman further explains here: "The maritime strategy I had in mind was based mostly on sound principles long familiar to the navy; unfortunately, neither the navy nor anyone else had heard them for some time, and the very act of articulation was bound to be controversial in a town where systems analysis had been mistaken for strategy itself. We had to contend with a vast bureaucracy allergic to different thinking and jealous of its prerogatives."

³² CNAS is a Washington DC-based think-tank that was co-founded by Michèle A. Flournoy in 2007.

³³ With the fall of the Soviet Union came the end of the Nation's "containment" strategy which had its roots in National Security Council Report 68 (NSC 68) of 14 April 1950.

³⁴ Michèle A. Flournoy, Shawn Brimley, Vikram J. Singh, *Making America Grand Again: Toward a New Grand Strategy*, (Washington DC: Center for a New American Century, 2008), 11.

³⁵ Frank Hoffman, *From Preponderance to Partnership: American Maritime Power in the 21st Century*, (Washington DC: Center for a New American Century, 2008), 16.

³⁶ Ibid., 19.

³⁷ Ibid., 17.

³⁸ Ibid., 17-18.

³⁹ Ibid., 18-19.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 19-20.

⁴¹ Ibid., 22. Hoffman's rationale is that "the tri-modal fleet seeks a better balance, a modular architecture operative across brown, green and blue waters. It is also designed to fulfill the Navy's principle roles: diplomatic, constabulary, engagement, and military. Hoffman further explains that the argument for a "tri-modal" fleet was first presented by himself during the "Concerted Cooperation" presentation at the Center for Naval Analysis (17 October 2006).

⁴² Dr. Thomas P. M. Barnett also summarized his conceptual argument in a video presentation from a 2005 TED Conference held in Monterey, CA, available via the internet at: http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/thomas_barnett_draws_a_new_map_for_peace.html (accessed 15 March 2009).

⁴³ "Glossary" linked from the *Thomas P. M. Barnett Home Page*, <http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com/glossary.htm> (accessed 15 March 2009).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ The Navy plays an important role, but when it comes to *Security and Freedom at Home*, the Coast Guard holds most of the assets, particularly with its new generation of cutters coming online.

⁴⁶ USNS MERCY (T-AH 19) arrived on scene within several weeks of the Asian Tsunami tragedy and played a vital role in the unprecedented international relief effort.

⁴⁷ USNS MERCY (T-AH 19) executed a follow-up mission to South and Southwest Asia in 2006 and deployed again to U.S. Pacific Command in support of the *Pacific Partnership 2008* H/CA mission last summer. USS PELELIU (LHA 5), a big-deck amphibious ship, executed the *Pacific Partnership 2007* H/CA mission the previous summer to great success. Meanwhile, in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility, USNS COMFORT (T-AH 20) executed a 2007 H/CA mission to areas of Central and South America and followed up its visit again following year with the *Continuing Promise 2008* H/CA mission. Similar missions for 2009 have been announced. Additionally, smaller scale efforts have been ongoing off the shores of West Africa since 2007 in the form of the *Africa Partnership Station* security assistance and capacity-building initiative.

⁴⁸ U.S. Navy large deck amphibious ships are very busy and finding room in their rotational deployment schedules, already planned out for several years down the road, for an additional H/CA deployment places an enormous burden on both the ship and its crew.

⁴⁹ Current fleet data provided by the U.S. Navy's *Naval Vessel Register* located at: <http://www.nvr.navy.mil/nvrships/sbf/fleet.htm> (accessed 23 March 2009). Navy Planned Fleet data obtained from Ronald O'Rourke, *CRS Report to Congress: Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Services, October 2, 2008): CRS-3.

